

# 5 New pastures

## What is it like to start a new life in another country?

‘Tomorrow to fresh woods  
and pastures new’

From ‘Lycidas’ by JOHN MILTON

### Talk about ...

- If you and your family had to go and live in a country on the other side of the world, what do you think you would miss most of all about where you live now?
- What things (clothes, attitudes, food) are unique to your country that you would be sad to leave behind?
- Is there anything you would be happy to see changed?

### Word origins

**nostalgia** (n), from the Greek word *nostos*, meaning ‘return home’ and *algos*, meaning ‘pain’. The suffix ‘-algia’ is used a lot in medical terminology.

*Related words:*

- myalgia (muscle pain)
- cephalgia (headache)

The English poet Milton uses the phrase ‘fresh woods and pastures new’ as a metaphor for a new start in life. A pasture is a place where animals such as cows or sheep graze. Some people choose to uproot their lives to make a new start in life in another country. Others are forced to move due to circumstances such as war or famine.

Read the start of the letter opposite about young people making a new start in life. How do you think you would feel in their position? Do you think you would experience any homesickness, or nostalgia?

## 5A Informal letters Reading, Comprehension and Writing

- Read the development of ideas in an informal letter
- Identify the features of informal letters
- Write an informal letter

### The start of a new adventure

Dear Sarah,

22 January

Wow, can you believe I’ve been here three weeks already?! You never thought I’d do it, did you, but here I am – and I’ve already made loads of new friends. It was an eventful journey. As we drove off the ferry at 5.30 am, Dan suddenly asked me which way to go, which was a bit of a shock! He had shown me the route on the map on the ferry the night before, just before we turned in for the night. I thought he was just being chummy – I didn’t realize he wanted me to navigate! Just as well his satnav is up to date!

Anyway, we arrived in Zilina at lunchtime and had to get ready to teach immediately as our first classes started in the afternoon. I have three classes and I’ve made friends in each class. The students made me feel so welcome and have already invited me into their homes to try their local grub and have taken me on trips to see ...



### Comprehension

A

- 1 Where has the letter writer gone? Why?
- 2 How are the young teachers travelling?

B

- 1 This is an informal letter to a friend. Find examples of language features which are typical of informal writing.
- 2 What punctuation features also show that the letter is informal?
- 3 In the letter, the writer uses some colloquial language. What do you think the following mean: ‘turned in’, ‘up to date’, ‘being chummy’, ‘grub’?

C

- 1 Imagine a teacher from the UK came to your country and you wanted to show them everything that is best about your culture and your area. Where would you take them? What would you do with them? What food and drink would you introduce them to?

### Finish the letter

Imagine you are the teacher from the UK who has written the letter. The students have done all the things you suggested in question C1 to show you how wonderful their region is. Complete the letter to your friend back home, describing what you have done. Remember to use the same informal tone and other features of informal writing.